Bass. Our feast shalbe much honored in your mariage.
Gra. Wele play with them the first boy for a thousand ducats.
Ner. What,and stake downe?
Gra. No, we shall nere win at that sport and stake downe.
But who comes heere? *Lorenzo* and his infidell?
vvhat, and my old Venecian friend,*Salerio*?

Enter *Lorenzo, Iessica*, and *Salerio* a messenger from Venice.

Bassa. Lorenzo and *Salerio*, welcome hether,
if that the youth of my newe intrest heere
haue power to bid you welcome: by your leaue
I bid my very friends and countrymen
sweet *Portia* welcome.
Por. So doe I my Lord, they are intirely welcome.
Lor. I thanke your honour, for my part my Lord
my purpose was not to haue seene you heere,
but meeting with *Salerio* by the way,
he did intreate me past all saying nay,
to come with him along.
Sal. I did my Lord,
and I haue reason for it, Signior *Anthonio*
commends him to you.
Bass. Ere I ope his Letter,
I pray you tell me how my good friend doth.
Sal. Not sicke my Lord, vnlesse it be in mind,
nor well, vnlesse in mind: his letter there
vvill show you his estate. *open the letter.* He opens
Gra. Nerrissa, cheere yond stranger, bid her welcom.
Your hand *Salerio*, what's the newes from Venice?
How doth that royall Merchant good *Anthonio*?
I know he will be glad of our successe,
We are the *Iasons*, we haue won the fleece.
Sal. I would you had won the fleece that he hath lost.
Por. There are some shrowd contents in yond same paper,
That steales the colour from *Bassanios* cheeke,
Some deere friend dead, else nothing in the world
could turne so much the constitution

of any constant man: what worse and worse?
With leaue *Bassanio*, I am halfe your selfe,
and I must freely haue the halfe of any thing
that this same paper brings you.
Bass. O sweete *Portia*,
heere are a few of the vnpleasant'st words
that euer blotted paper. Gentle Lady,
when I did first impart my loue to you,
I freely told you all the wealth I had
ranne in my vaines, I was a gentleman,
and then *I* told you true: and yet deere Lady,
rating my selfe at nothing, you shall see
how much *I* was a Braggart, when I told you
my state was nothing, I should then haue told you
that *I* was worse then nothing; for indeede
I haue ingag'd my selfe to a deere friend,
ingag'd my friend to his meere enemie
to feede my meanes. Heere is a letter Lady,
the paper as the body of my friend,
and euery word in it a gaping wound,
issuing life blood. But is it true *Salerio*?
hath all his ventures faild,what,not one hit,
from Tripolis, from Mexico and England,
from Lisbon, Barbary, and *India*,
and not one vessell scape the dreadfull touch
of Merchant-marring rocks?
Sal. Not one my Lord.
Besides, it should appeare, that if he had
the present money to discharge the Iew,
hee would not take it: neuer did *I* know
a creature that did beare the shape of man,
so keene and greedie to confound a man.
He plyes the Duke at morning and at night,
and doth impeach the freedome of the state
if they deny him iustice. Twentie Merchants,
the Duke himselfe, and the Magnificoes
of greatest port haue all perswaded with him,

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE *Merchant of Venice* (STC 22296) LONDON, 1600 NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND (Bute.494) Octavo